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ABSTRACT

A comparative research project is being implemented to describe how curriculum guidelines are developed and applied in Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, and to compare the underlying structures and strategies that influence and determine curriculum work and curriculum-making at different levels of decision making and enactment. This paper describes the project as it is unfolding in Norway. The expectation is that political, programmatic, and practical levels of decision making will be examined. The extensive education reform effort in Norway at this time is characterized as a systemic reform, and as a curriculum-driven systemic reform that implies coherence among school types nationally. This implies a nationally mandated curriculum developed in a political context. At the programmatic level, the reform involves the construction of a core curriculum, principles and guidelines for compulsory schooling, and syllabuses for the subjects taught in elementary and lower secondary school. The interactions of working groups, of groups of leaders of working groups, and an expert group of three professors of education to create the syllabuses are described. The development of the syllabus for school subjects may be said to be an example of a segmented curriculum process. It appears that the professional, programmatic, and political interests were taken care of in segmented areas. Responsibility for coordination has been in the hands of the Ministry of Education. The involvement of the Minister of Education has led to rather firm organizing with regard to the time schedule and the form and level of precision of the content. (Contains 32 references.) (SLD)

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FROM POLITICS TO PRACTICE: REFLECTIONS FROM A RESEARCH PROJECT
ON CURRICULUM POLICY AND NOTES FROM (OUTSIDE AND INSIDE) A
NATIONAL CURRICULUM REFORM PROJECT¹

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Introduction

There seem to be two growing concerns in the educational research community related to educational politics and policy: The issue of educational reform and the role of educational research in the reform process(cf. House 1996, Educational Researcher, vol.25, no.7,8, and 9). In both concerns is embedded the relationship of research to the practice of curriculum making and to classroom implementation.

The research project 'From curriculum planning to curriculum and classroom practice' focuses on curriculum policy making related to the process of curriculum reform. In the reports from Germany and Switzerland the line from school politics and national policy strategies to curriculum making is evident and strengthened compared to curriculum work some years ago. The Norwegian part of the project is about to be launched. There is no research data as yet. But national school politics and policy strategies exist and are very visible as part of the curriculum reform and the plans for implementation. In our paper we will try to highlight certain aspects of national school politics and policy strategies related to the nature and the content of the curriculum reform, and to the process of curriculum making. Related to the second part, the question of influence from research and curriculum theory to the practice of curriculum making is tentatively touched upon.

According to the theoretic framework underlying the project our contribution will concentrate on the political level highlighting the role of tradition, of value transmission and

responsibility for the future and on the 'programmatic' level where the process of curriculum committees working on curriculum making is focused on. Our references are especially English versions of two policy documents from the Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. In the first case our main reference is the *Core Curriculum for Primary, Secondary and Adult Education*, and in the second one the report *Organization of the Work of Preparing Syllabuses for the Subjects Taught in the Primary and the Lower Secondary School*.

First, however, we intend to present very briefly the research project 'From curriculum planning to curriculum practice' just started up this February², giving to start with an idea of the theoretic frame of reference of the project .

² The preparation of the project was in 1996 supported by a grant from the Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. From February 1997 a Research Fellow, Kirsten Sivesind has a three(+ one) year grant from the Norwegian Research Council.

4

**From curriculum planning to curriculum and classroom practice
- a comparative research project¹**

The aim of the project is to describe how curriculum guidelines are developed and applied in Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland and to compare the underlying structures and strategies that influence and determine curriculum work and curriculum-making at different levels of decision making and enactment. The research covers seven phases from background documentation analysis through extensive standardized surveys covering all people involved in the curriculum making process at all levels to classroom observation in a limited number of schools, and also interviews with a limited number of teachers.² It is the recent curriculum in the school subjects science, mathematics, social studies/history, Norwegian and English in the last class in compulsory schooling that is chosen.

The theoretic frame of reference for the research project is linked to curriculum history theory based on historical research on curriculum administration, and on more recent empirical research on curriculum making in Germany (the Federal Republic) in the period 1970-1985.

Curriculum administration, understood as the administratively organized part of the social process of selecting and

3 According to a recent paper (Ohlhaver 1997) the German and Swiss participants have named their project 'Syllabus Links - - An Investigation of the Development and Use of Curriculum Decisions.'

controlling curricula, is closely linked to the approach in curriculum history labeled as the "content or the subject matter and the methods of determining and implementing it in actual practice" (Schubert 1985 p.1191, cp. also Haft and Hopmann 1990 p.2).

Historical research into curriculum administration focuses mainly on the rise of curriculum administration and the development of curriculum guidelines at national level. Such research has been initiated, and conducted in an extensive way by the Institute for Science Education, IPN, at the University of Kiel. A main focus of this research is the question of which historical preconditions shape current structures and contents in such a way as to limit or enhance possibilities of curriculum development or implementation. '

And the project includes a comparative study of the history of 19th century state-run curriculum work in Schleswig-Holstein, Denmark, and Prussia focusing on curriculum administration (Haft and Hopmann 1990 pp. 64-77). '

Especially three sets of phenomena -- that are relevant for analyzing and understanding also curriculum-making of today -- were identified: the processes of *compartmentalization*, *segmentation* and *licensing* (Hopmann 1988). These are differentiation processes linked to centralization of curriculum work and administration and belonging to what Stefan Hopmann calls the *multiple realities of curriculum* (Hopmann 1988, 1991), or should we say '*le curriculum dans les plusieurs mondes*'..

The process of segmenting school law into distinct sections produced a *compartmentalized* system of school legislation for different types of schools step by step. A side effect of this differentiation was the modern system of a written curriculum, the syllabus divided into school subject as a guideline for centralized decision making concerning the local topics to be taught, and detailed regulations for timetables, examinations, teaching material etc. for different school types. In a compartmentalized system no one can be held responsible for the whole.

Segmentation refers in this context to the process by which the responsible national school authorities have developed and maintain strategies that keep apart the different interest groups wanting to influence curriculum work. On one hand it is a question of power, of being in control of the development, and to make sure **who has the final say** -- on the other a question of giving some room for the different parties who have a right to give their views.

Licensing is a conventional administrative mechanism whereby planning authorities or supervision is disengaged from executive responsibility. Its basic idea in education is that any teacher is free to choose whatever instructional model that seems suitable and that thereby she or he assumes full responsibility for the results of his or her instruction

In the ongoing project the focus is not on how this multiple realities evolved historically, but which of them still has an impact on current curriculum work and in case how.

The other project "Procedural Analysis of Curriculum Work and Curriculum Development" is founded on an empirical description of actual proceedings in the Federal Republic of Germany. Such a description includes interviews with participants, examination of documents, analyses of reports, and reviews of available research material. This approach has been applied to curriculum work in committees, to the role of associations and organizations in curriculum work, and to a documentation of the scope and level of state run curriculum development (Haft and Hopmann 1989, 1990). Extensive surveys covering all members of state appointed committees for the different school subjects have produced data related to especially the academic/professional background and educational standpoints as well as the deliberation process in the committees. Interesting comparisons from the present study in Germany are already produced -- especially linked to stated influences and motives regarding pattern of content-choice (cf. Rosenmund 1997). As a result of the findings of this research, has emerged what is called the Aarauer Lehrplannormal -- as a way to analyze and give a systematic description of problems and lines of development in curriculum work. It is maintained that historically the two main reasons for modern schooling is mediation of tradition and qualifications. The curriculum guidelines serve several functions: a political function legitimating the content of schooling; a programmatic function, producing the appropriate content, and a practical function, framing and supporting the planning of teaching and learning in the classrooms.

The Aarauer Lehrplannormal

	Tradition	Mediation	Future
Political	Societal Culture Heritage	Aims Bildung	Societal- cultural Expectations Key problems
Programmatic	Institutional Heritage Syllabus Links	Curriculum Work Syllabus Licensing	Institutional Outcome Expectations
Practical	School Subjects	School Reality Praxis Freedom of methods	Outcome in Use Expectations Everyday Life

Das Aarauer Lehrplannormal according to Hopmann & Künzli 1995.
Our translation

The project aims at investigating all three levels of decision making. Until now only analyses of public documents related to the political level have been undertaken. These data gives valuable information regarding political and administrative structures of importance for the curriculum development process, like e.g. efforts of reorganization of public administration in order to co-ordinate tasks relating to curriculum work (cf. Sivesind 1997, Sivesind/Gundem 1997). The present phase of the project may be described as one in which the concern is to develop hypotheses about the relationship between politics, public administration and agents representing levels of praxis in different parts of the educational system, to be tested by the empirical study starting this autumn.

The Political Level

Systemic Reform? Nature and Content of the Reform

It is possible to say that the extensive education reform taking place in Norway at the moment may be characterized as being a "systemic reform" and in fact as a *curriculum driven systemic reform*. What is meant by systemic reform may differ from country to country.⁵ In a Norwegian setting it makes sense to characterize systemic reform in the curriculum field as a reform that is: 1) part of a wider reform of the educational and societal system,⁶ 2) part of a comprehensive educational reform aimed at all levels of education, 3) a reform implying coherence along school types within the school system, 4) a reform striving for goal coherence : that is national overarching goals translated into goals for all school subjects and into curriculum programs at school levels and 5) a reform being translated into implementation through taking into the consideration and into the planning of strategies all relevant factors and constraints - including teacher education and assessment.

In our setting here we will highlight only the question of reform striving for goal coherence : that is national overarching goals translated into goals for all school subjects and into curriculum programs at school levels.

A policy curriculum document for primary, secondary and adult education alike

Perhaps the most obvious and marked characteristic of the reform is that it implies coherence along school types within the school system. The means to accomplish this is first and foremost a common core curriculum or a type of nationally mandated curriculum guideline which is in fact a general policy curriculum document for primary, secondary and adult education alike - called a core curriculum - "core" used in a special way - denoting underlying principles and aims meant to be common to all schools as defined by central bodies and not a common core of factual knowledge and skills to be mastered by everyone. In many ways this new core curriculum is at the heart of the reform - it is to put it differently the "raison d'être" of the reform. For a policy document to attain this role and addressing itself not only to teachers and pupils, but to parents and the general public as well, rather drastic demands as to form and content seemed pertinent.

Since the sixties until this last year, the different curriculum guidelines have had the same format and type of structure and language. A completely new layout, extensive use of pictures, less expert language and even a return to old-fashioned expressions denoting virtues like "diligence", have made critical voices say that this is a complete break with the traditions of curriculum guidelines in our country.

The changes are, however, also of a different kind. There is an explicit endeavor to link the essence and spirit of different Education Acts, and of recent white papers related

to educational matters directly to the core curriculum and at the same time safeguarding the imbedded messages of former curriculum guidelines. This has resulted on one side in a presentation of overarching principles as well as of aims defined as a) something to work towards and as b) something one can know whether one approaches or not. And on the other side of presenting the contents of the core curriculum under the following headings: The spiritual human being, the creative human being, the working human being, the liberally-educated human being, the social human being, the environmentally aware human being, and the integrated human being.

Before leaving the common core curriculum one thing must be mentioned - that is the role and place given to tradition understood in a cultural, social or even political sense as a means of reaching the aims and goals of the core curriculum. The inherent arguments are linked to the necessity to secure maintenance of a democratic society in providing personal development and extended literacy for all in a growing specialized and multicultural society (cf. Gundem 1995).

Inherent dilemmas and constraints (paradoxes)

It is possible to claim that inherent dilemmas and constraints characterize the new core curriculum. Without stressing the points in this connection a few examples will be presented.

- **Both** *Bildung* **and** competence orientated
- **Both** values **and** goal orientated
- **Both** progressive **and** restorative
- **Both** national **and** international
- **Both** cultural tradition **and** technology
- More stress on national syllabus versus locally developed syllabus
- Predominance of Christianity in a multicultural society (cf. the new **compulsory** school subject *Knowledge in Christianity with Religious and Moral Orientation*)

Of course, this list could be made longer -- and the different items should be explained more fully - but this occasion denies the possibility. One may, however ask, what has made possible this kind of development?

Two tentative lines of thought

Without claiming a full answer we will explore two tentative lines of explanation.

The first one is related to the German-Scandinavian tradition of Didaktik and Bildung where the curriculum is built on overarching principles more than on pragmatic considerations like e.g. an English curriculum tradition (cf. Reid 1997). A curriculum like the new Norwegian one accepts and even celebrates **the both /and** instead of the **either/or** of aims and

goals (cf. Westbury 1996, Hamilton 1997)

David Hamilton(1997) underlines in a recent note that the Anglo-Saxon curriculum prioritizes 'what should they know' instead of "what should they become?" In one sense , he argues, this is because twentieth century Anglo-saxon schooling has become dominated by short-term labour market questions rather than long-term cultural questions. But there is according to Hamilton another more profound reason. English thought has great difficulty in reconciling *being and becoming*, because it does not accept both/and dialectical modes of thinking and praxis. Instead it has remained faithful to the either/or, subjective/objective dualism, (highlighted at the dawn of Absolutism, by Descartes).

The second line of explanation concerns what may be called the context of influence and the context of policy text production as a precondition for a redefinition of curriculum documents in terms of tradition (Ball 1990, Bowe and Ball 1992). In order to explain how it was possible for the core curriculum 'to happen' it may be useful to look closer at the context that constituted the arena of formulation (Lindensjö & Lundgren 1986) or in other words the context of policy text production. And that relates to major changes having taken place in curriculum work on the national level. Most remarkable is the replacement of a traditional curriculum committee by three reference groups as consulting bodies or "working parties", and with the Minister of Education as the chief entrepreneur and author assisted by his staff. Especially one of the reference groups consisted of members representing different spheres of intellectual life and

interest groups, and was in fact influential in producing and formulating the first policy document on the school - society relation - a document strong in restorative thinking. Educational experts were all together scarce - only one person in each group and not especially representing the "new progressives".⁴ Representatives from the teacher unions were altogether wanting. Summing up: an analysis of the context of policy text production makes evident a marked shift in what has been called the triangle of tension regarding influencing forces on school politics (Ball 1990). The professional elements are squeezed out leaving some room for certain societal interest groups while the dominant deciding forces are political in nature.

The following part of our contribution will concentrate on the programmatic level of curriculum work.

Curriculum Making - the Programmatic Level or Phase⁴

The project's research object is curriculum making pertaining to certain school subjects of lower secondary schooling.

The following part of the presentation will, as already indicated, tell the story of certain aspects regarding the organization of the curriculum making process of the syllabus

⁴ The following part of the paper is partly based on Gundem/Sivesind, 1997 pp.8-14

for primary and lower secondary schooling.⁵ A relevant question pertaining to the process is: has the reorganization led to a still more differentiated and split process - contrary to the stated political intentions? It is consequently the segmentation phenomenon that is focused on.

Some background information

The curriculum work connected with Reform 97 has three distinct phases: 1) The work connected with the Core Curriculum for Primary, Secondary and Adult Education, 2) the work connected with Principles and guidelines for the structure, organization and content of the 10-year compulsory school, and 3) the work related to the Syllabuses for the Subjects Taught in the Primary and the Lower Secondary School. My presentation here is related to the development to the last part of the curriculum.

Three phases:

There were three phases of the curriculum making process: **phase 1** taking place in the department to clarify what the work would involve, **phase 2**, work on the syllabus by appointed **working groups**, **phase 3**, the hearing process, i.e.

⁵ A more fully analyses to the whole process is given in Sivesind/Gundem (1997) 'Prosjektorganisering og systemutvikling i norsk læreplanarbeid'

distribution of the syllabus for comment and preparation of a final draft. In our presentation it will be focused on certain aspects of phase 1 and 2 .

Co-operating partners:

The National Education Offices (one in each of the counties) was given the responsibility for organizing the work of the syllabus of the one school subject allotted to them which also meant to carry out secretarial functions for the respective working groups. Other important co-operating partners were, just to mention some, the Department for Upper Secondary Education, the Parents' Committee, the National Center for Teaching Aids, and the Sami Education Board.

Planned as a project

The project leader:

The process was planned as a project with a project leader.

The person appointed project leader was a long-term officer from the Department of Primary and Lower Secondary Education in the Ministry. Recently she has, however, passed a Master's Degree in Education at the University of Oslo and aspires to research activities within the field of curriculum and school administration. No doubt (and according to her own statements) her academic and curriculum background has influenced the way she has thought about aspects of the planning process and especially regarding the professional work.

The professional work:

The project organization involved different groups with different responsibilities and varying degree of involvement:

Steering Group

Working groups

L-groups (the leaders of the working groups)

Basic Group

Expert Group

Regional reference group

National reference group

Contact committee (employees' and employers' organizations)

Information meeting(interest groups etc. 'stakeholders')

It is in this connection only possible to mention the different groups. The chart somehow illustrates how they were meant to interact and function. Special attention will, however, be drawn to three of the groups: the working groups, the group consisting of the leaders of the working groups and the expert group.

GR97 - ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK ON THE CURRICULUM/SYLLABUSES

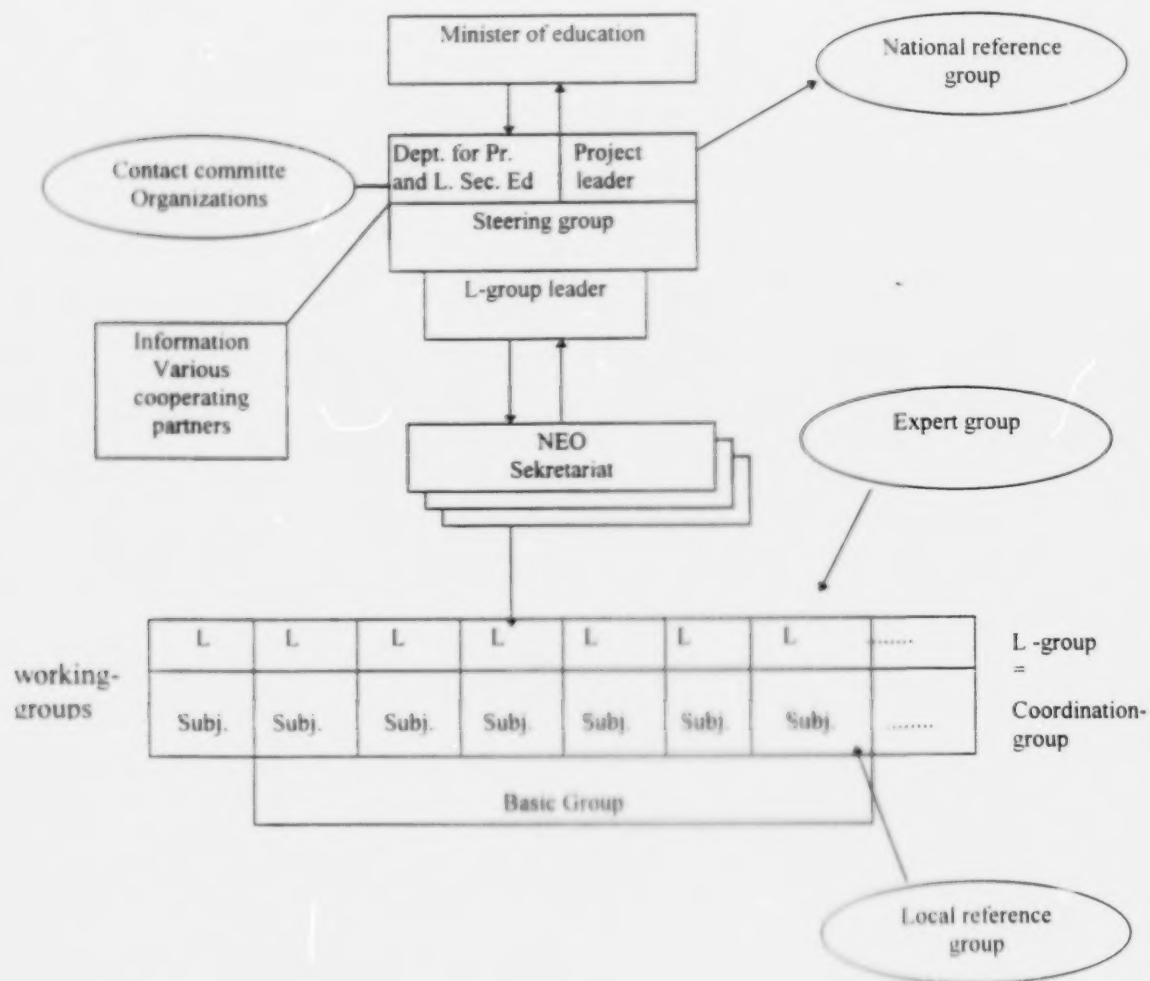


Figure 1. GR97 Organization of the Work of Preparing Syllabuses for the Subjects Taught in the Primary and the Lower Secondary School

The working groups:

According to the project leader the criteria for the composition of the working groups were to a certain extent influenced especially by the work of Joseph Schwab regarding composition and work of the curriculum group put forward in his 1978 essay "The Practical 4: Something for Curriculum Professors to Do". And in fact the composition of the members differs from the traditional compositions in earlier curriculum revisions where experienced subject teachers for the school level dominated. Now a university or college representative as well as a representative for the subject at Upper Secondary level and a representative from the "milieu" were demanded. The Sami Education Board was allowed a representative in groups the board found it necessary to be represented in.

The L-groups (the leaders of the working groups):

Of even greater interest is the criteria for the selection of the leaders of the working groups and the way the training or 'competence-building' of the leaders was planned and carried through. Both the fact that a set of criteria was produced and the nature of the criteria indicates a reflective consciousness as to the nature of curriculum work in a group. The criteria were:

- * A high level of theoretical and practical pedagogic competence
- * A high level of competence and authority in the subject
- * Ability to express a personal educational ideology

- * Ability to formulate a text
- * Ability to lead a product-oriented process in a group

What is important to notice is the stress put on theoretical competence, a personal educational ideology and qualities necessary for group leadership. Especially regarding the last aspect a marked influence from Schwab's 'the curriculum professor' may be discerned.

The group consisting of the leaders constituted in fact a special forum designed not only to coordinate the work of the groups, but also to consider cross-disciplinary and other issues of interest to all the groups. And perhaps more important, there were specific seminars for direct 'competence building' especially in curriculum theory. To give an example: A seminar/conference where one of the main themes was Curriculum work: The contribution from curriculum theory and didactics (cf. Gundem 1993). In this seminar the leaders of the groups became familiar with the conceptual framework of John Goodlad(1979), Josep Schwab's 'The Practical'(1978) stressing the problematization and deliberation in curriculum work , and also William A. Reid's(1993) "Curriculum Planning as Deliberation".'

Especially two aspects seem to bear significance for the leaders of the curriculum groups according to the debate and their own statements: the importance of problematization and deliberation as part of the curriculum work in the groups and the role of the leader related to this, and the understanding of differing interests trying to impinge on and influence

curriculum work, and consequently the need for achieving a "public interest" (Reid 1991, 1993).¹⁰

The expert group:

The expert group consisting of three professors of education, was appointed in 1994 when the other groups were well established.¹¹ It had in a way a rather vague and informal position without an explicit mandate. It was called upon to comment on drafts as they were produced both individually and as a group (cf. Gundem 1994, 1995; Gundem/Imsen, Schnack 1995). The expert group was expected to be present at the different conferences held for the L Group and for the Working Groups participating as experts and advisors in plenary sessions as well as to the individual working groups during their sessions.

It is very difficult to assess the impact the expert group had - if any. The direct contact with the leaders and the groups - especially in clearing up matters pertaining to theoretical curriculum issues and to the language of curriculum making - seemed to be most rewarding.

Inherent dilemmas and constraints (paradoxes)

In a recent paper at a conference at Oslo University on curriculum research¹² Theo Koritzinsky, now an associate professor at Oslo Regional College, but former a left-wing politician who for many years was the Chairman of the Committee on Church and Education Affairs in the Norwegian Parliament, summed up some points regarding the interests and value conflicts between researchers and the political/

administrative levels in curriculum making. These points sum up to a certain extent what the expert group experienced especially regarding these levels:

Researchers	Political/administrative Level
time-consuming questions	time-pressure answers
"it depends"	"it will work"
broad concept of curriculum	narrow concept of curriculum
modest expectations on behalf of the written curriculum	the written curriculum as the reform
ambiguities/contradictions	harmonization

One way to sum it up is to say that the need for deliberation and problematization was in many ways recognized, but time pressure and the need for quick answers prevailed. Regarding certain important issues like the strong advice from the expert group to avoid 'management by objectives' and the use of 'behavioral objectives' a certain response may be noted.

From Policy to Practice - A Tentative Discussion Regarding the Subject Syllabus Work⁶

To sum up:

When the report *Principles and guidelines for the structure, organization and content of the 10-year compulsory school*, was put forward to the Storting, the national assembly, in October 1995, the work on the subject syllabuses had already started. This had made possible for the administration in the Ministry of Education to make their own guidelines and set their own preconditions for the curriculum work. One of the results was the project outline already mentioned *Organization of the Work of Preparing Syllabuses for the Subjects Taught in the Primary and the Lower Secondary School*. Selection of members and leaders started already June 1994. The expert group was appointed October the same year. Specific guidelines for the curriculum work also existed from November 1994 (KUF Nov 1994). In the following period, meetings and seminars with representatives for the involved groups and with participation from leaders and employees in the Ministry took place. On May 1 the curriculum groups handed over their drafts for the subjects syllabuses. The Ministry undertook the editing in cooperation with some of the group leaders(cf. KUF 29.06.95)

The 'Hearing Draft Report for the Syllabuses for the 10 Year

⁶ This part of the paper and the following one is based upon and more or less a translation of parts of Sivesind/Gundem, 1997 pp.24-31)

School L97. ' is dated July 1995. The formal period for ' hearing' was until 15 August the same year. After the 'hearing' the syllabuses for the different school subjects were revised in the Ministry regarding both form and content. The final version linking together the three parts is dated September 1997 and was put into operation the school year that started this August.

Looking at the process of organizing the curriculum work regarding the syllabuses for the different school subjects a lot of different groups were involved - which also was the case regarding the general core curriculum. As already indicated the criteria for the selection of members were not formally based as part of rules and regulations, but based on principles derived from curriculum theory. So far there seemed to be a high degree of professional interests involved. The expert group, however, had a rather vague and informal position without an explicit mandate. Other groups also intervened both on national and regional levels representing political interests as well as the interests of organizations from economic and professional life. What influence came from these co-operating partners is very unclear.

The 'Basic Group' was formally given the task of coordinating the syllabus work -- and the guidelines regarding a common form and structure of the syllabus worked in the same direction. The real co-ordination happened, however, through the presence and personal attendance at the working meetings by people from the Ministry. The Minister of Education, himself, took part whenever he felt it important. The political-administrative influence was enormous.

Even so, the coordinating effort did not prove sufficient for securing unanimity between the syllabuses for the different school subjects. After the 'hearing' major revisions took place in the Ministry involving new ad hoc groups as reference groups.

The development of the syllabus for the school subjects may be said to be an example of a segmented curriculum process. A lot of groups were involved and were drawn into different parts of the process. Apart from the working groups who in a higher degree than before represented different professional arenas, it seems that the professional, programmatic and political interests were taken care of in segmented fora.

The actual work of the project group was accomplished according to the time schedule set by the Ministry Administration. The later process was, however, delayed due to discrepancy between the expectations of the Ministry Administration and what in fact the curriculum groups provided. This is evident by the relatively big changes which took place through the editing and revisions of the drafts by the Ministry Administration.

Traditional and characteristic features of the Norwegian curriculum work: a tentative discussion

Our description has mostly touched upon the curriculum work of the third part of the process: the work regarding the syllabus. If we include the work related to the two other parts 1) the *Core Curriculum for Primary, Secondary and Adult*

Education, and 2) Principles and guidelines for the structure, organization and content of the 10-year compulsory school,

we see the same pattern (cf. Sivesind 1997, Sivesind/ Gundem 1997). Even if the curriculum work formally was transferred from an external body (Grunnskolerådet) in 1992, it has not simplified the process. A great quantity of groups of actors both in the Ministry and externally have been involved in performing various tasks. New groups not traditionally included, have been included - especially people from different parts of the society -- making e.g. up one of the reference groups. The different working groups and reference groups have, however, performed in separate fora and the coordinating responsibility has been in the hands of the Ministry. This process may be described as segmented.

The three phases covering the development of the main parts may to a certain extent be said to follow a traditional procedure like the one shown by the German studies. Groups who traditionally have had certain tasks in curriculum development are asked by the Ministry Administration to take part. It starts by a discussion regarding the content, followed by the appointment of committees to take part in the development of drafts before a wider hearing takes place, and the subsequent and final revision by the Ministry.

The procedure is not formally laid down - even if 'hearings' are recommended in the rules and regulations for the work of the Ministry. The way it works, it may rather be looked upon as an established strategy for handling different interest groups and external bodies who claim a right to influence the

process. When the problematics of the curriculum are discussed in a great quantity of different fora and at different levels the Ministry Administration get legitimacy regarding their final choices.

There are, however, certain features that may be said to be characteristic for the Norwegian case. First and foremost the direct involvement from the political top leader, the Minister of Education, regarding both the development of the general core curriculum as well as the syllabus part. This has led to a more firm organizing related to both the time schedule as well as the form and level of precision of the content.

Groups of persons from all levels in the system were involved. This led to contributions of different kinds creating dilemmas at the programmatic level.

In conclusion it may be relevant to hint at a certain connection between decisions regarding content and the course of the process. The first general part is a product of political-administrative decisions. The last part, the syllabus one, is of a more concrete type and a result of a much more complex process characteristic of discrepancies and disagreements between the groups of actors involved. A complicating factor is the subject matter and pedagogy of the different school subjects. The problematics concerning the content effects different professional domains while the Ministry Administration wants co-ordination between school levels and school types. The part in between is, however, both a result of early deliberations from the first phase of the process, but has also taken up ideas that have been developed

through the syllabus process. The actors from the Ministry Administration have had the last say regarding both form and content of this part.

A more close investigation - which is being planned - may elucidate the question regarding a deprofessionalization of the curriculum work and if the political and administrative interests have been strengthened - like they seem to.

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NOTES

1. The compulsory School Reform will come into force on 1. July 1997.
The most important changes are school start at the age of
six (instead of seven), 10 years of schooling (instead of nine) and
a new curriculum.

2. The aim of the project is to describe how curriculum guidelines
are developed and applied in the different countries and to compare
the structures and strategies implied in the work. Until now
research studies on curriculum have been related to the individual
country's traditions and reforms. The research project is
consequently one of the first ones to study several corresponding

levels. The starting point is a description of curriculum work in each country constituting a common platform for systematic comparison. In each country there will be analyses of relevant documents and an extensive standardized survey study, and interviews.

Module 1:

Part 1 General document analyses:

- Legal framework regulating the work and responsibilities
- Duration of time: startingpoint, duration, when ready etc.
- Institutional conditions: Who was involved in different tasks and groups

Documentation: A statement concerning the documentation used/applied

Part 2. An analysis of all relevant curriculum documents regarding the last year of compulsory schooling for the school subjects biology, chemistry, physics, history, English and mathematics.

Module 2:

Survey study to secure the data for a description of the structures involved in the development process

Module 3:

Survey study to secure

the data for a description of the implementation process.

Module 4:

Interview study regarding module 2 and 3.

Module 5:

Interviews at school levels about implementation of the new curriculum and of other relevant material for planning at classroom level.

Module 6:

Evaluation

Module 7:

Comparative analyses.

3. Examples of such research are :

- the history of curriculum administration in Germany since 1800 focusing on the social structure of curriculum making as a frame of change
- the history of subject matter in syllabi since 1800 focusing content analysis of subject matter as a clue to curriculum change
- the history of methods and instruction, e.g. the history of the project method and the impact of the monitorial movement in Germany focusing on methods as a key to curriculum design.

4. The research conducted at IPN has given rise to an international collection of emerging research within the field: Case studies in Curriculum Administration History (Haft and Hopmann eds. 1990) with contributions from Germany, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom and United States

5. AT the meeting of OECD, CERI (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation),

TEACHERS, CURRICULUM REFORM AND BASIC SCHOOLING Fort Myers, USA 29 October - 3 November 1995 it was discerned between three types of systemic reform: "teacher initiated", "standards driven" and "curriculum driven" systemic reform.

6.6.) The curriculum reform is part of a wider educational and societal reform (for an elaboration cp. Min. Ed. Doc. 1994c p.1):

- A school reform where all children are accepted for the compulsory school at the age of six, and compulsory education is extended to 10 years.
- A children's' reform
- A family reform (see also FUF without date)
- A cultural reform

7. Bjørg Gundem was the only "curriculum professor" in one of the reference groups.

8. Her name is Ellen Marie Skaflestad. In 1996 she was appointed "Rådgiver" with special international and Nordic responsibilities. The remaining tasks of phase 3 were taken over by other people.

9. The leader of the group for the school subject English in a recent article referred to Goodlad's conceptual framework in her presentation of the curriculum guidelines for English teaching. (Bodil Arnestad: En presentasjon av den nye læreplanen i engelsk. Language and Language Teaching 1, 1997, pp.3-10)

10. The conclusions are drawn from personal attendance and observation, cf. Gundem 1993

11. The Expert Group consisted of Professor Gunn Imsen, Thronheim University, Professor Karsten Schnack, The Royal Danish School of Education, and Bjørg B. Gundem, The University of Oslo.

12. Curriculum Making and Curriculum Studies: Comparative and Empirical Research on Curriculum Change. University of Oslo, Faculty of Education, Institute for Educational Research 10-12 February 1997